

## THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF FEMALE CRIMINALITY: INVESTIGATING KEY FACTORS AMONG WOMEN IN KARACHI'S CENTRAL PRISON

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### Abstract

The study investigated the "Socio-economic Factors Leading to Criminality among Women in Karachi." It specifically focused on how substance abuse, income stability, and history of arrest influence the type of crimes committed. Given the unique challenges faced by female prisoners, understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions. Quantitative research was conducted using structured questionnaires to collect data through face-to-face interviews with a sample of 48 female prisoners, drawn from the central prison for women Karachi. The study aimed to explore the diverse social and economic factors affecting criminal behavior in this population, which is often overlooked in criminological studies. The target population was selected due to rising concerns about the specific circumstances of female prisoners and the need for focused research on their experiences. A simple random sampling technique ensured diverse representation in the sample. The questionnaires included closed-ended questions, allowing for efficient and reliable data collection. Ethical considerations were strictly upheld throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality was maintained, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The findings indicate that a substantial portion of participants were aged 18-25 (31%), with 27% aged above 39. A significant number identified as single (42%), while 25% reported being married. The largest group of participants resided in areas categorized as "Other," including Kemari and Lanhdi (38%), ethnically, Sindhi participants formed the largest group (31%), followed by Pashtun (23%) and both Punjabi and Baloch (21% each). Family structures revealed that 38% lived in joint families, while 31% were from nuclear families. Most participants owned their homes (38%), and a significant proportion had 5 to 9 family members (31%). Daily meal sharing was common, reported by 42% of participants. Economic data showed that 29% had an income between 11,000 to 20,000, but nearly half (46%) felt their income was sufficient to meet their needs. Financial security varied, with 42% feeling somewhat secure. The primary source of personal expense coverage was through husbands (25%), followed by borrowing (21%).

Regarding criminal history, 42% of participants had been arrested, with drug-related offenses being the most common crime (25%). Economic challenges were prevalent, with 38% struggling to pay bills and 46% believing economic challenges influence criminality. The study also highlighted the role of substance abuse, with 52% of participants using drugs before imprisonment. Tobacco was the most commonly used substance (19%). Notably, 44% were currently in treatment for substance abuse, and 23% strongly agreed that drugs contribute to criminality. These findings underscore the complex interplay of socio-economic factors and highlight the need for targeted interventions that address financial stability, family dynamics, and substance abuse to reduce criminal behavior among female prisoners.

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of female criminality has long been overshadowed by the focus on male offenders, with women's unique socio-economic challenges often being overlooked in criminological research. However, recent studies have highlighted the growing concern of women involved in criminal activities, revealing patterns of offenses that differ from those typically committed by men. In 2003, women in state prisons in the United States were more likely than men to be incarcerated for drug offenses (29% vs. 19%) and property offenses (30% vs. 20%), while they were less likely to be incarcerated for violent crimes (35% vs. 53%) (Brown et al., 2005). In Pakistan, particularly in the Punjab region, the criminal involvement of women has become increasingly alarming. A 2012 report from The Nation News revealed that over 4,000 women were involved in various heinous crimes, including kidnapping, theft, and murder. These women were implicated in the deaths of over 200 people, the kidnapping of 1,635 individuals, and a range of other criminal activities. In light of these disturbing trends, understanding the socio-economic factors contributing to female criminality has become essential for developing effective interventions.

This paper focuses on the socio-economic factors leading to criminal behavior among women in Karachi, with particular attention to the role of substance abuse, income instability, and criminal history. Through a systematic and ethical approach, data was collected from female prisoners in the central jail for women, Karachi, using a self-developed questionnaire. The research aims to uncover the underlying causes of criminal behavior in this often-neglected population, providing insights

into how socio-economic conditions influence female criminality. By addressing these factors, the study hopes to inform policy interventions and promote more targeted strategies to reduce the incidence of crime among women in Karachi.

## Data Analysis

This paper presents the results of the study, followed by a detailed discussion of the findings. It analyzes how socio-economic factors such as family background, economic conditions, and substance abuse contribute to criminal behavior among women in Karachi. The discussion compares these findings with existing literature and theoretical perspectives, providing insights into the unique socio-economic challenges faced by women in the region.

The Chi-Square test was applied as the primary statistical method to analyze the collected data. The results from the analysis provided insights into the socio-economic factors leading to criminality among women in Karachi.

All ethical considerations were maintained, including obtaining consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality of their responses, and maintaining the anonymity of their identities throughout the study. The findings from this research contribute to a better understanding of the topic and inform policy interventions aimed at addressing these challenges in Karachi.

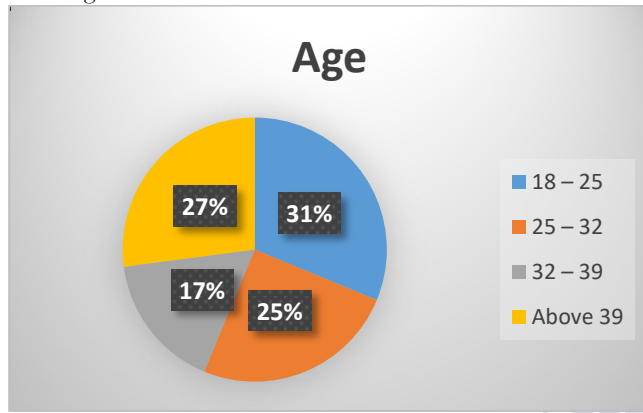
## Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 25	15	31.25%
25 – 32	12	25%
32 – 39	8	16.67%
Above 39	13	27.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 1

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their age



The study results showed that the majority of the participants were between the age group of 18 – 25 (31%), followed by 27% were in the age group of Above 39. However, a significant proportion of participants 25% were between the age of 25 – 32, and 17% were in the age group of 32 – 39.

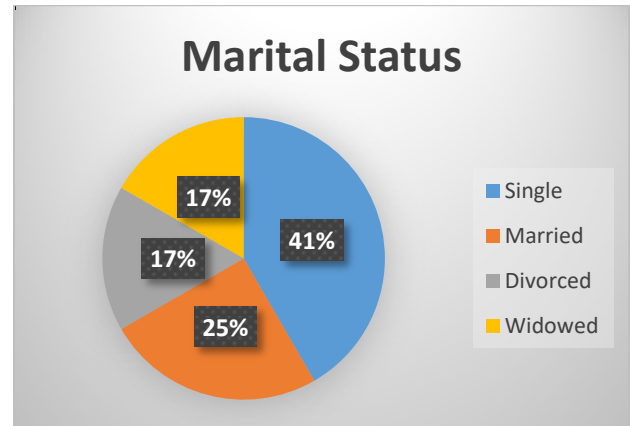
Table 2

Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	20	41.67%
Married	12	25%
Divorced	8	16.67%
Widowed	8	16.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 2

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Marital Status



The study results indicated that a significant portion of the participants identified as single, comprising approximately 42% of the sample. Following this, about 25% reported being married. Additionally, around 17% of the participants were either divorced or widowed, with both categories representing the same percentage.

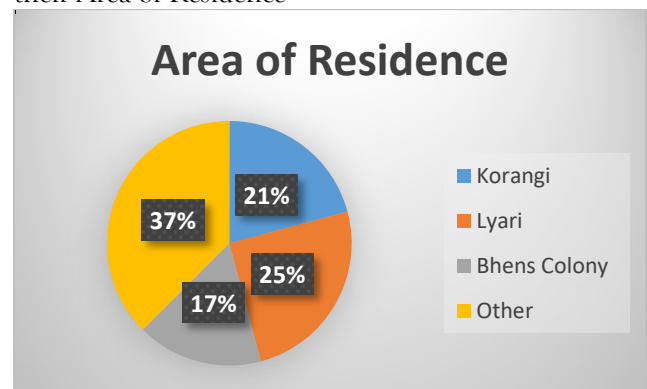
Table 3

Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Area of Residence

Area of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Korangi	10	20.83%
Lyari	12	25%
Bhens Colony	8	16.67%
Other	18	37.50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 3

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Area of Residence

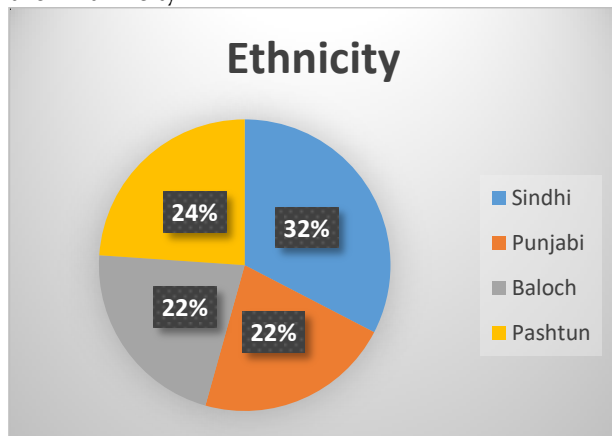


The study results revealed that the largest group of participants resided in the "Other" category including kemari and lanhdi, accounting for approximately 38% of the sample. This was followed by those living in Lyari, which represented about 25%. Participants from Korangi made up around 21%, while Bhens Colony accounted for approximately 17%.

**Table 4**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage
Sindhi	15	31.25%
Punjabi	10	20.83%
Baloch	10	20.83%
Pashtun	11	22.92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 4**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Ethnicity

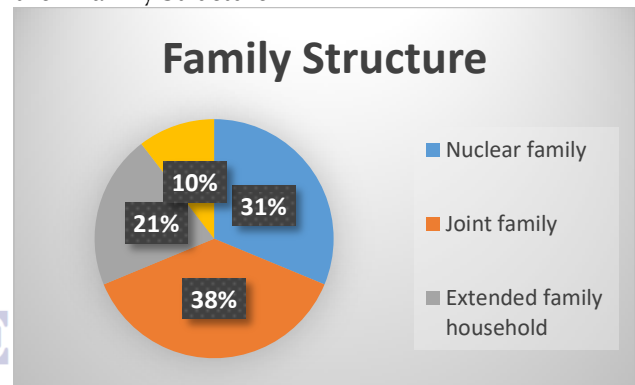


The study results indicated that the largest ethnic group among participants was Sindhi, comprising approximately 31% of the sample. This was followed by Pashtun participants, who accounted for about 23%. Both Punjabi and Baloch participants represented around 21% each.

**Table 5**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Family Structure

Family Structure	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear family	15	31.25%
Joint family	18	37.50%
Extended family household	10	20.83%
Other (please specify)	5	10.42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 5**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Family Structure

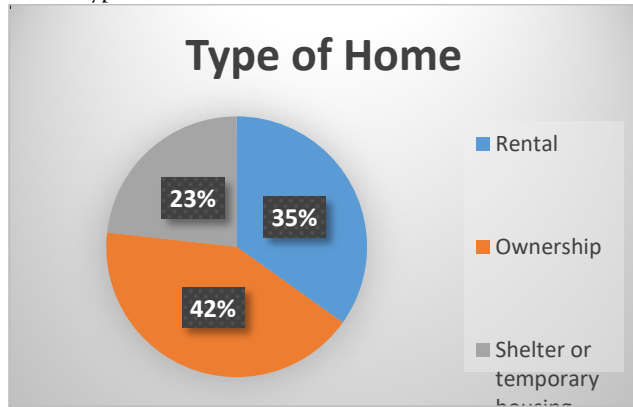


The study results showed that the majority of participants lived in joint families, comprising approximately 38% of the sample. This was followed by those from nuclear families, which accounted for about 31%. Participants from extended family households represented around 21%, while those in other family structures made up approximately 10%.

**Table 6**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Type of Home

Type of Home	Frequency	Percentage
Rental	14	31.25%
Ownership	20	37.50%
Shelter or temporary housing	14	20.83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 6**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Type of Home

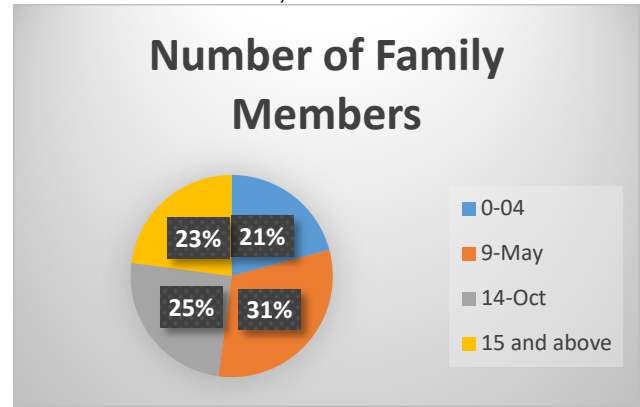


The study results revealed that the largest group of participants lived in owned homes, accounting for approximately 38% of the sample. This was followed by those in rental accommodations, which represented about 31%. Participants living in shelters or temporary housing made up around 21%.

**Table 7**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Number of Family Members

Number of Family Members	Frequency	Percentage
0-04	10	20.83%
05-09	15	31.25%
10-14	11	25%
15 and above	12	22.92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 7**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Number of Family Members

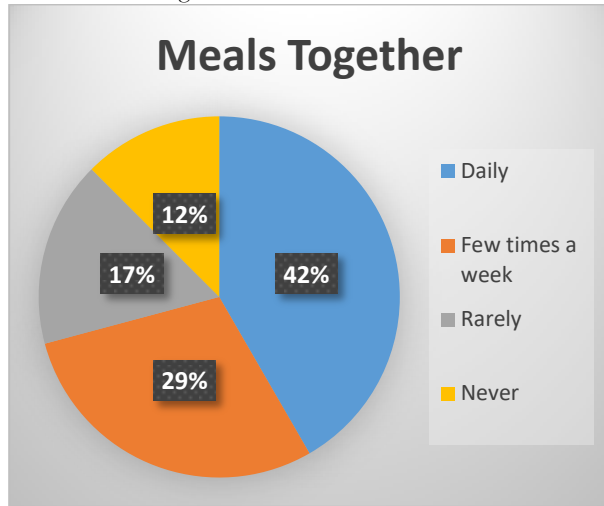


The study results indicated that the largest group of participants had 5 to 9 family members, comprising approximately 31% of the sample. This was followed by those with 15 or more family members, accounting for about 23%. Participants with 10 to 14 family members represented around 25%, while those with 0 to 4 family members made up approximately 21%.

**Table 8**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Meal Together

Meal Together	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	20	41.67%
Few times a week	14	29.17%
Rarely	8	16.67%
Never	6	12.50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 8**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Meals Together



approximately 42% of the sample. This was followed by those who reported having meals a few times a week, accounting for about 29%. Participants who rarely shared meals represented around 17%, while those who never did made up approximately 13%.

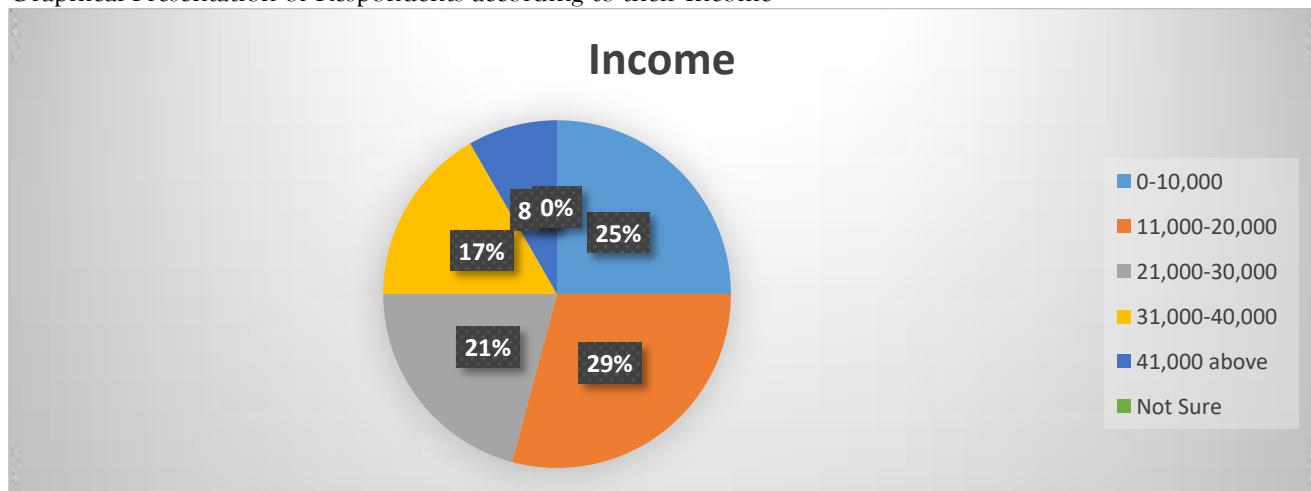
The study results showed that a significant portion of participants shared meals daily, comprising

**Table 9**

Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Income

Income	Frequency	Percentage
0-10,000	12	25%
10,000-20,000	14	29.17%
20,000-30,000	10	20.83%
30,000-40,000	8	16.67%
40,000 above	4	8.33%
Not Sure	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 9**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Income



The study results indicated that the largest group of participants had an income in the range of 11,000 to

20,000, comprising approximately 29% of the sample. This was followed by those earning between

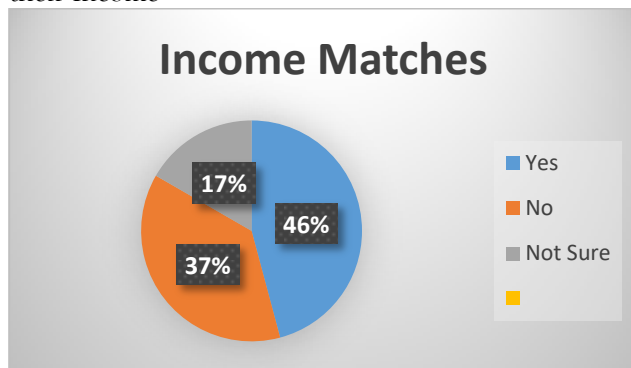


0 to 10,000, accounting for about 25%. Participants with incomes of 21,000 to 30,000 represented around 21%, while 16% reported earnings between 31,000 to 40,000. Finally, those earning above 41,000 made up approximately 8%.

**Table 10**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Income

Income Matches	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	45.83%
No	18	37.50%
Not Sure	8	16.67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 10**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Income



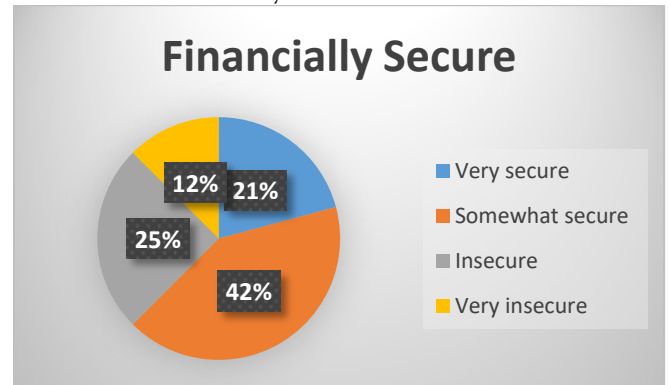
The study results revealed that nearly half of the participants (approximately 46%) felt that their income was sufficient to meet their needs. This was followed by those who believed their income did not match their needs, accounting for about 38%. Additionally, around 17% of participants were uncertain about whether their income was adequate.

**Table 11**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Financial Security

Financially Secure	Frequency	Percentage
Very secure	10	20.83%
Somewhat secure	20	41.67%
Insecure	12	25%
Very insecure	6	12.50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 11**

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Financial Security

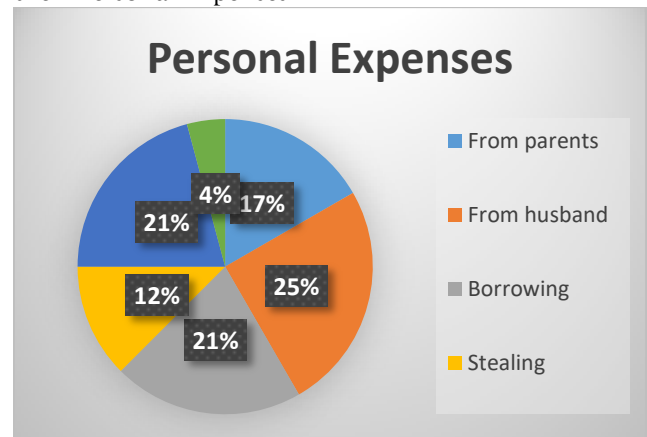


The study results indicated that the largest group of participants felt somewhat secure financially, comprising approximately 42% of the sample. This was followed by those who reported being financially insecure, accounting for about 25%. Participants who felt very secure made up around 21%, while 13% described themselves as very insecure.

**Table 12**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Personal Expenses

Personal Expenses	Frequency	Percentage
From parents	8	16.67%
From husband	12	25%
Borrowing	10	20.83%
Stealing	6	12.50%
Self-earned income	10	20.83%
Other (please specify)	2	4.17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 12**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Personal Expenses



The study results revealed that the largest group of participants covered their personal expenses through their husbands, comprising approximately 25% of the sample. This was followed by those who relied on borrowing, accounting for about 21%. Participants who utilized self-earned income also represented around 21%. Additionally, about 17% of participants received financial support from their parents, while 13% reported using funds acquired through stealing. Lastly, 4% indicated other sources of income.

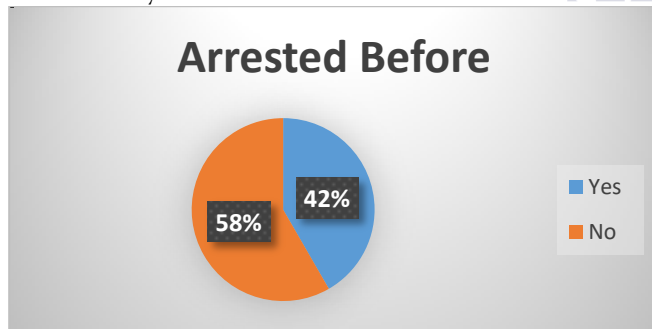
**Table 13**

Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their History of Arrest

Arrested Before	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	41.67%
No	28	58.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 13**

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their History of Arrest



The study results indicated that a significant portion of participants had been arrested before, comprising approximately 42% of the sample. In contrast, the majority, around 58%, reported that they had never been arrested.

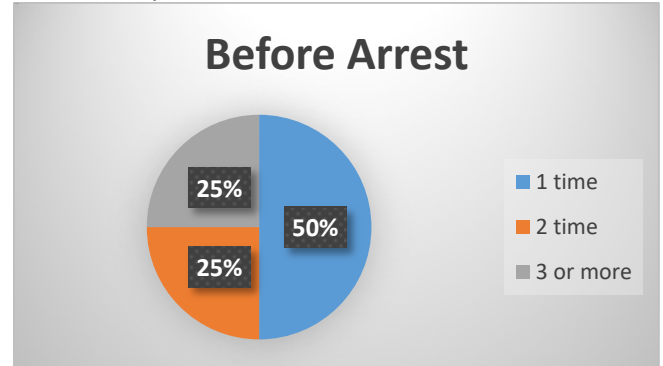
**Table 14**

Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their History of Arrest

Arrested Before	Frequency	Percentage
1 time	10	50%
2 time	5	25%
3 or more	5	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 14**

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their History of Arrest



The study results showed that among participants who had been arrested, half reported being arrested one time, comprising 50% of this group. Additionally, 25% indicated they had been arrested twice, while the same percentage (25%) reported three or more arrests.

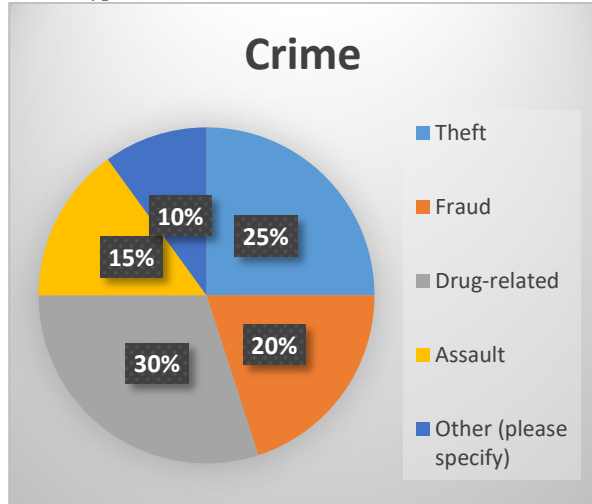
**Table 15**

Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Type of Crime

Type of Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Theft	14	20.83%
Fraud	8	16.67%
Drug-related	18	25%
Assault	4	12.50%
Murder	4	8.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 15**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Type of Crime

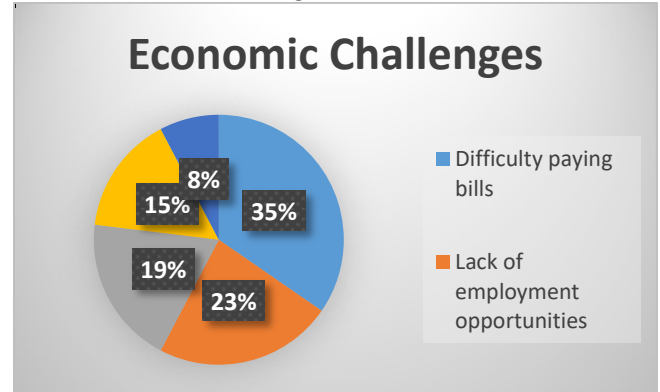


The study results indicated that the most common type of crime reported by participants was drug-related offenses, comprising approximately 25% of the sample. This was followed by theft, which accounted for about 21%. Participants reported fraud as the next most common crime, representing around 17%. Assault was noted by 13% of participants, while other types of crimes made up approximately 8%.

**Table 16**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Economic Challenges

Economic Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Difficulty paying bills	18	37.50%
Lack of employment opportunities	12	25%
Inability to afford basic necessities	10	20.83%
Debt	8	16.67%
Other (please specify)	4	8.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 16**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Economic Challenges

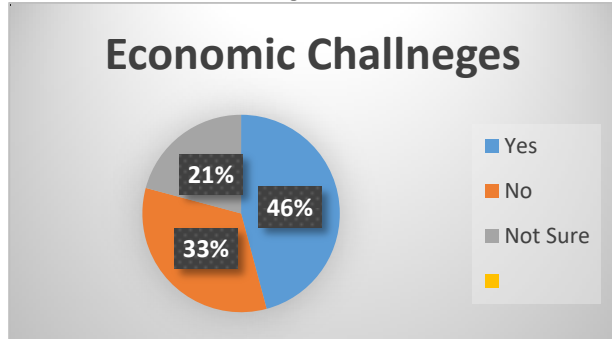


The study results indicated that the most significant economic challenge faced by participants was difficulty paying bills, reported by approximately 38% of the sample. This was followed by a lack of employment opportunities, which accounted for about 25%. Participants also noted the inability to afford basic necessities, representing around 21%. Debt was identified as a challenge by 17% of participants, while other economic challenges made up approximately 8%.

**Table 17**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Economic Challenges

Economic Challenges influence to Criminality	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	45.83%
No	16	33.33%
Not Sure	10	20.83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 17**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Economic Challenges



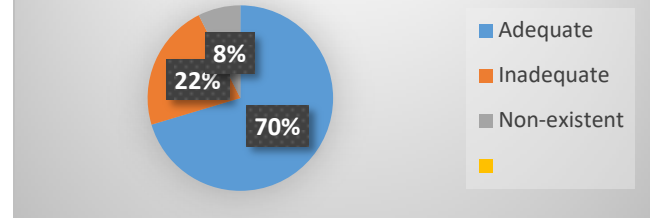
The study results revealed that nearly half of the participants (approximately 46%) believed that economic challenges influence criminality. This was followed by 33% who reported that they did not think economic challenges had an impact. Additionally, around 21% of participants were unsure about the relationship between economic challenges and criminality.

**Table 18**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Financial Support from Family

Financial Support from Family	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate	32	79.166%
Inadequate	12	25%
Non-existent	4	8.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 18**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Financial Support from Family

### Financial Support from Family

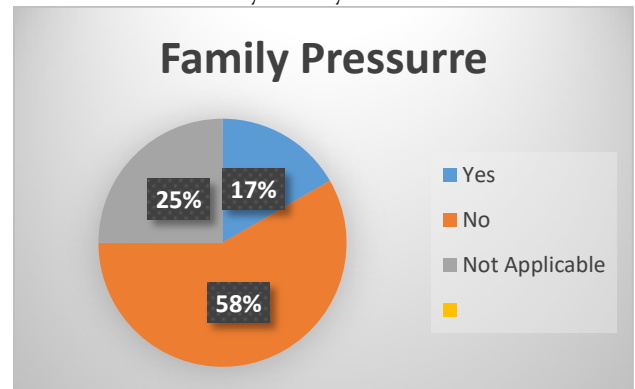


The study results indicated that a significant majority of participants felt that financial support from their family was adequate, comprising approximately 79% of the sample. In contrast, 25% reported that this support was inadequate, while 8% indicated that it was non-existent.

**Table 19**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to whether Pressured by Family

Pressured by Family	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	16.67%
No	28	58.33%
Not Applicable	12	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 19**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to whether Pressured by Family



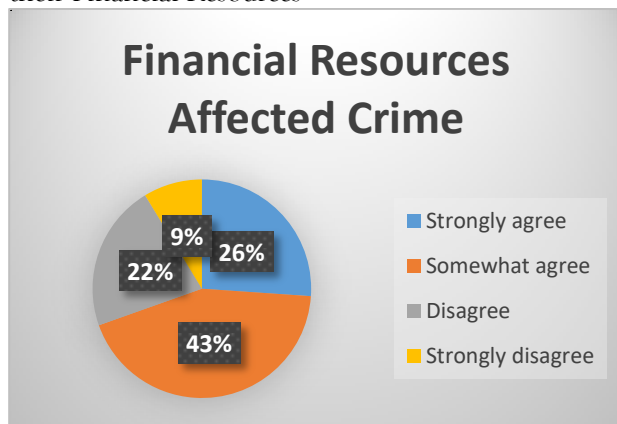
The study results indicated that a majority of participants (approximately 58%) reported that they did not feel pressured by their family. In contrast, 17% of participants acknowledged feeling pressured,

while 25% indicated that the question was not applicable to their situation.

**Table 20**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Financial Resources

Financial Resources Affected Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	25%
Somewhat agree	20	41.67%
Disagree	10	20.83%
Strongly disagree	4	8.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 20**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Financial Resources



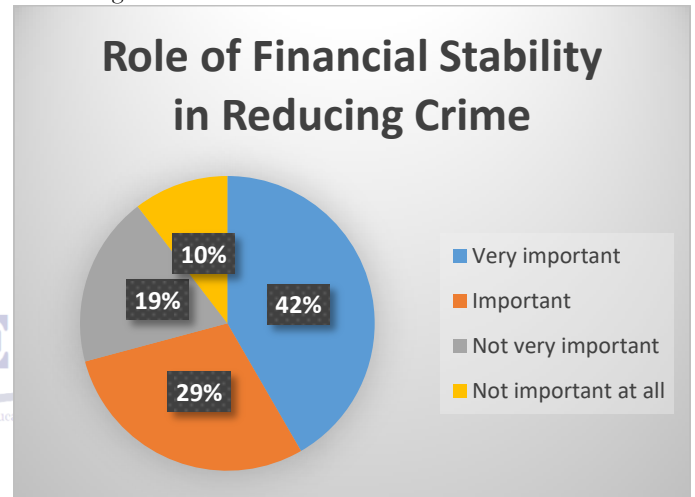
The study results indicated that a significant portion of participants (approximately 42%) somewhat agreed that financial resources affect crime. This was followed by 25% who strongly agreed with this statement. Conversely, 21% of participants disagreed, while 8% strongly disagreed.

**Table 21**

Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to the Role of Financial Stability in Reducing Crime

Role of Financial Stability in Reducing Crime	Frequency	Percentage
Very important	20	41.66%
Important	14	29.166%
Not very important	9	18.75%
Not important at all	5	10.416%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 21**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Role of Financial Stability in Reducing Crime

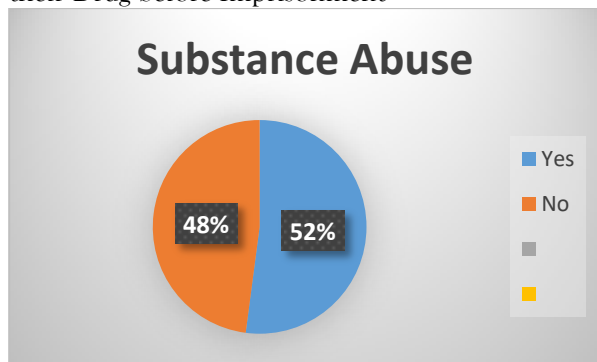


The study results indicated that a substantial majority of participants (approximately 42%) viewed financial stability as very important in reducing crime. This was followed by 29% who considered it important. Additionally, 19% of participants felt that financial stability was not very important, while 10% believed it was not important at all.

**Table 22**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Drug before Imprisonment

Drug before Imprisonment	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	52.08%
No	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 22**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Drug before Imprisonment



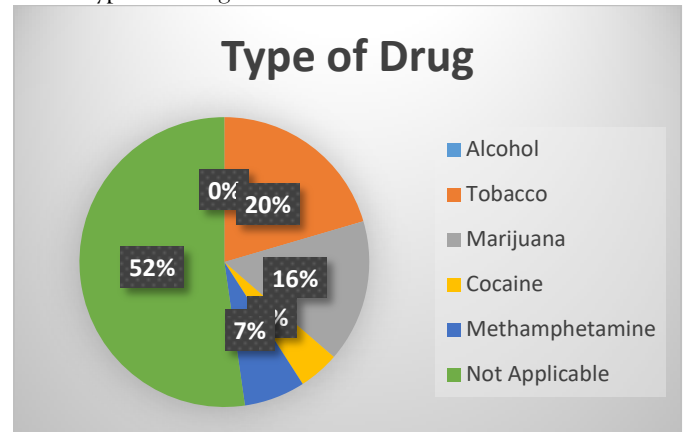
The study results indicated that a majority of participants (approximately 52%) reported using drugs before imprisonment. In contrast, 48% stated that they did not use drugs prior to their incarceration.

**Table 23**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Type of Drug

Type of Drug	Frequency	Percentage
Alcohol	4	8.33%%
Tobacco	9	18.75%
Marijuana	7	14.58%
Cocaine	2	4.16%
Methamphetamine	3	6.25%
Not Applicable	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 23**

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Type of Drug

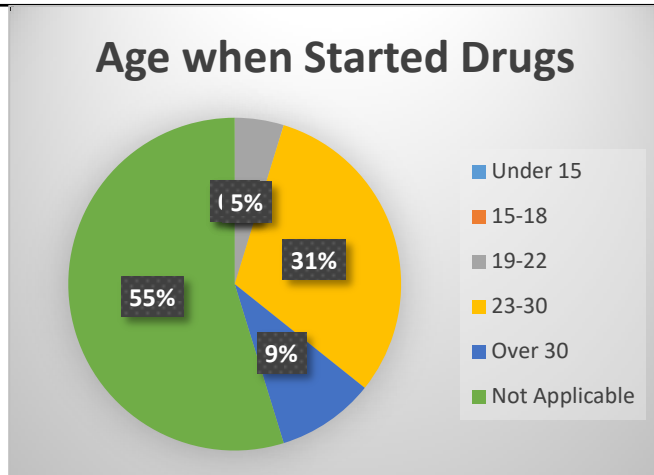


The study results showed that among participants who reported drug use, tobacco was the most commonly used substance, accounting for approximately 19%. This was followed by marijuana, which represented around 15%. Alcohol was used by about 8% of participants, while cocaine and methamphetamine were reported by 4% and 6%, respectively. Notably, 48% of participants indicated that drug use was not applicable to them.

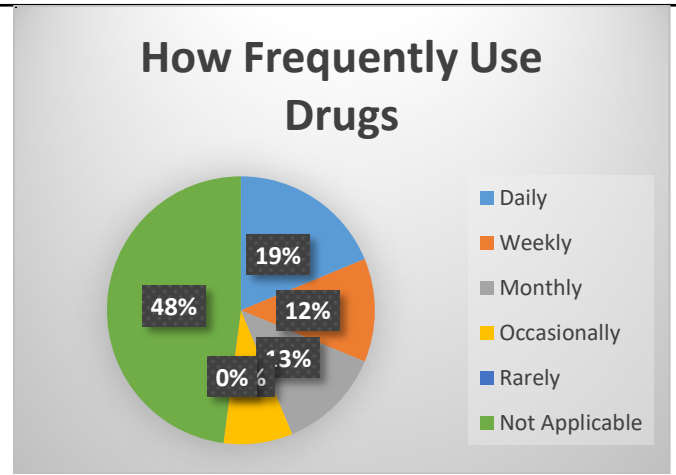
**Table 24**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Age when Started Drugs

At What Age Started Drug	Frequency	Percentage
Under 15	0	0%
15-18	4	8.33%%
19-22	2	4.166%
23-30	13	27.083%
Over 30	4	8.33%
Not Applicable	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 24**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Age when Started Drug



The study results indicated that the most common age range for participants to start using drugs was between 23 and 30 years, comprising approximately 55%. This was followed by those who began using drugs between 15 and 18 years, accounting for about 31%. Participants who started at over 30 years also represented 8%, while a smaller group began between 19 and 22 years, making up around 9%. Notably, 48% of participants indicated that this question was not applicable to them.



The study results indicated that among participants who reported drug use, the most common frequency was daily, comprising approximately 19% of the sample. This was followed by those who used drugs weekly and monthly, both accounting for about 13%. Additionally, 8% of participants reported using drugs occasionally, while no participants indicated that they used drugs rarely. Notably, 48% of participants stated that the question was not applicable to them.



**Table 25**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to Frequency of Drugs

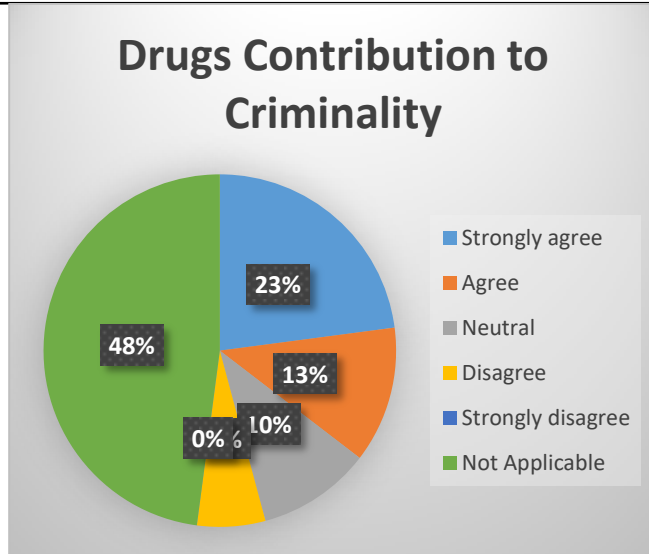
How Frequently use Drugs	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	9	18.75%
Weekly	6	12.5%
Monthly	6	12.5%
Occasionally	4	8.33%
Rarely	0	0%
Not Applicable	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 25**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Frequency of Drug

**Table 26**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Drug Contribution to Crime

Drugs Contributed to Criminality	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	11	22.91%
Agree	6	12.5%
Neutral	5	10.41%
Disagree	3	6.25%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Not Applicable	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 26**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Drug Contribution to Crime

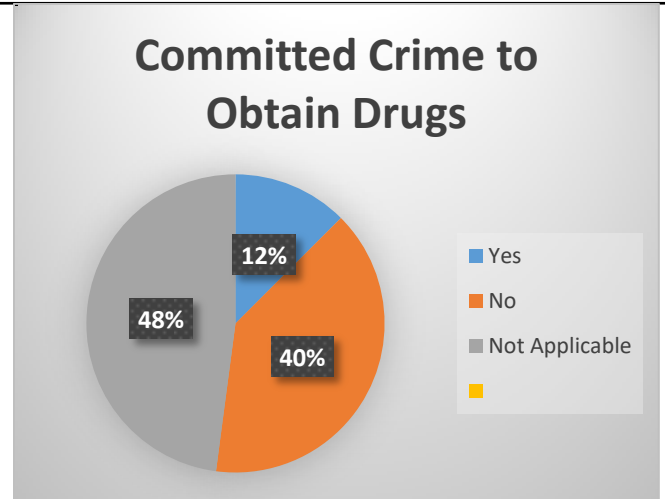


The study results indicated that a notable portion of participants (approximately 23%) strongly agreed that drugs contributed to criminality. This was followed by 13% who agreed with the statement. Additionally, 10% of participants remained neutral, while 6% disagreed. No participants strongly disagreed with the statement. Notably, 48% indicated that the question was not applicable to them.

**Table 27**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Drug Contribution to Crime

Committed Crime to Obtain Drugs	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	12.5%
No	19	39.583%
Not Applicable	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 27**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Drug Contribution to Crime



The study results indicated that a small portion of participants (approximately 13%) admitted to committing a crime to obtain drugs. In contrast, 40% reported that they did not engage in criminal behavior for this purpose. Notably, 48% of participants stated that the question was not applicable to them.

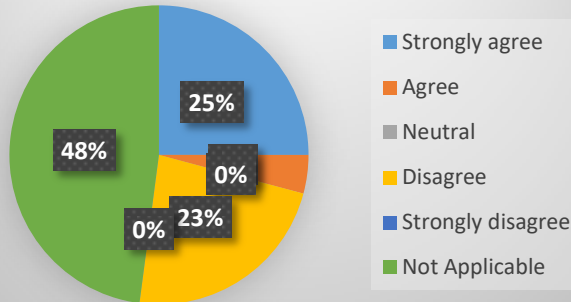
**Table 28**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Drug Contribution to Crime

Criminal Behavior influenced by Substance	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	25%
Agree	2	4.16%
Neutral	0	0%
Disagree	11	22.91%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Not Applicable	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 28**  
Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Drug Contribution to Crime



### Criminality influenced by Substance



The study results indicated that a significant portion of participants (approximately 25%) strongly agreed that substance use influenced criminal behavior. Only 4% agreed with the statement, while 23% disagreed. No participants were neutral or strongly disagreed with the assertion. Notably, 48% indicated that the question was not applicable to them.

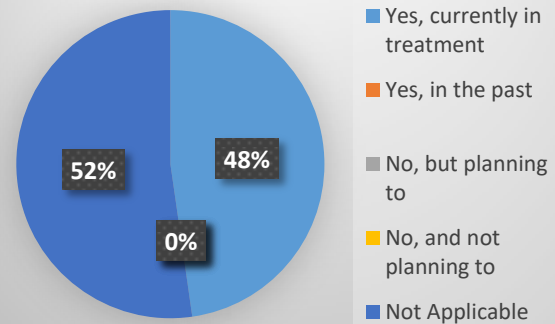
**Table 29**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to their Treatment for Substance Abuse

Treatment for Substance Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Yes, currently in treatment	21	43.75%
Yes, in the past	4	8.33%
No, but planning to	0	0%
No, and not planning to	0	0%
Not Applicable	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 29

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Treatment for Substance Abuse

### Treatment for Substance Abuse



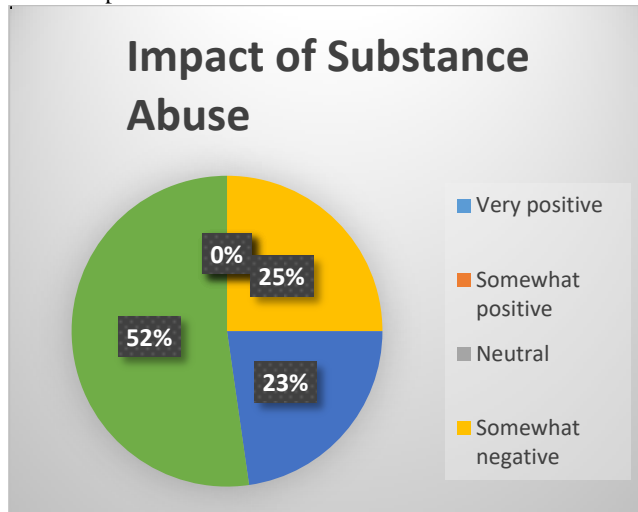
The study results indicated that a significant majority of participants (approximately 44%) were currently in treatment for substance abuse. Additionally, 8% reported having received treatment in the past. Notably, no participants indicated that they were planning to seek treatment or that they were not planning to seek treatment. Furthermore, 48% stated that the question was not applicable to them.

**Table 30**  
Frequency and Percentage of respondents according to Impact of Substance Abuse

Impact of Substance Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Very positive	0	0%
Somewhat positive	4	8.33%
Neutral	0	0%
Somewhat negative	11	22.916%
Very negative	10	20.833%
Not Applicable	23	47.91%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 30

Graphical Presentation of Respondents according to their Impact of Substance Abuse



The study results indicated that a majority of participants perceived the impact of substance abuse as somewhat negative, accounting for approximately 23%. This was closely followed by those who viewed the impact as very negative, representing about 21%. Only 8% of participants reported a somewhat positive impact, while no participants indicated a very positive or neutral impact. Additionally, 48% stated that the question was not applicable to them.

**Results**

The investigation into the relationship between family structure and the type of crime committed by women prisoners reveals no significant association. The chi-square test produced a calculated value of 0.3357, which is well below the critical value of 5.99 with 2 degrees of freedom at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ) is accepted, suggesting that family structure does not significantly influence the type of crime committed by prisoners.

The investigation into the relationship between substance abuse and the type of crime committed by women prisoners reveals no significant association. The chi-square test produced a calculated value of 0.0830, which is considerably lower than the critical value of 3.841 with 1 degree of freedom and a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . As a result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{02}$ ) is accepted, indicating that substance abuse is not significantly related to the type of crime committed by prisoners.

The investigation into the relationship between the likelihood of income covering expenses and the type of crime committed by female prisoners shows no significant association. The chi-square test produced a calculated value of 1.4674, which is considerably lower than the critical value of 3.841 with 1 degree of freedom and a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . As a result, the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) is accepted, indicating that the likelihood of income covering expenses is not significantly related to the type of crime committed by female prisoners.

The investigation into the relationship between drug abuse and involvement in a history of arrest among female prisoners reveals a significant association. The chi-square test produced a calculated value of 7.2157, which exceeds the critical value of 3.841 with 1 degree of freedom and a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) is rejected and alternate hypothesis ( $H_{A4}$ ) is accepted, suggesting that drug abuse is significantly related to a history of arrest among female prisoners.

The investigation into the relationship between history of arrest and the type of crime committed by prisoners shows no significant association. The chi-square test produced a calculated value of 3.4619, which is lower than the critical value of 3.841 with 1 degree of freedom and a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_{05}$ ) is accepted, indicating that the history of arrest is not significantly related to the type of crime committed by prisoners.

**Summary**

To concludes the study by summarizing the key findings, drawing conclusions, and offering recommendations. It suggests policy interventions and strategies aimed at addressing the socio-economic drivers of criminality among women in Karachi.

This paper investigated the “Socio-economic Factors Leading to Criminality among Women in Karachi.” It specifically focused on how substance abuse, income stability, and history of arrest influence the type of crimes committed. Given the unique challenges faced by female prisoners, understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing effective interventions.

Quantitative research was conducted using structured questionnaires to collect data through face-to-face interviews with a sample of 48 female prisoners, drawn from the central prison for women Karachi. The study aimed to explore the diverse social and economic factors affecting criminal behavior in this population, which is often overlooked in criminological studies.

The target population was selected due to rising concerns about the specific circumstances of female prisoners and the need for focused research on their experiences. A simple random sampling technique ensured diverse representation in the sample. The questionnaires included closed-ended questions, allowing for efficient and reliable data collection. Ethical considerations were strictly upheld throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality was maintained, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

The findings indicate that a substantial portion of participants were aged 18-25 (31%), with 27% aged above 39. A significant number identified as single (42%), while 25% reported being married. The largest group of participants resided in areas categorized as "Other," including Kemari and Lanhdi (38%), ethnically, Sindhi participants formed the largest group (31%), followed by Pashtun (23%) and both Punjabi and Baloch (21% each).

Family structures revealed that 38% lived in joint families, while 31% were from nuclear families. Most participants owned their homes (38%), and a significant proportion had 5 to 9 family members (31%). Daily meal sharing was common, reported by 42% of participants.

Economic data showed that 29% had an income between 11,000 to 20,000, but nearly half (46%) felt their income was sufficient to meet their needs. Financial security varied, with 42% feeling somewhat secure. The primary source of personal expense coverage was through husbands (25%), followed by borrowing (21%).

Regarding criminal history, 42% of participants had been arrested, with drug-related offenses being the most common crime (25%). Economic challenges were prevalent, with 38% struggling to pay bills and 46% believing economic challenges influence criminality.

This paper also highlighted the role of substance abuse, with 52% of participants using drugs before imprisonment. Tobacco was the most commonly used substance (19%). Notably, 44% were currently in treatment for substance abuse, and 23% strongly agreed that drugs contribute to criminality.

These findings underscore the complex interplay of socio-economic factors and highlight the need for targeted interventions that address financial stability, family dynamics, and substance abuse to reduce criminal behavior among female prisoners.

### Limitations

The study relied on self-reported data from participants, which may introduce bias. Due to the sensitive nature of topics such as substance abuse and criminal history, participants might have been reluctant to disclose accurate information, leading to underreporting or overreporting of certain behaviors and experiences.

The sample size of 48 participants may limit the generalizability of the findings. A larger sample could provide more robust insights and allow for more nuanced analysis of the relationships between socio-economic factors and criminal behavior.

### Conclusion

The findings of this paper underscore the urgent need to address the socio-economic factors influencing criminal behavior among female prisoners. The complex interplay between economic challenges, family dynamics, and substance abuse significantly impacts the lives and decisions of these women. Many participants reported financial instability, with 29% earning between 11,000 to 20,000 PKR, and approximately 46% feeling their income was insufficient to meet their needs. This exacerbates their vulnerability and predisposition to criminal activity.

Substance abuse emerged as a critical factor, with 52% of participants acknowledging their drug use prior to incarceration. Tobacco was the most commonly used substance (19%), highlighting the need for targeted interventions that not only address the immediate issues of drug dependence but also tackle the underlying economic pressures and family conflicts contributing to such behaviors. The stigma surrounding drug use and criminality further

complicates their situation, limiting their access to support and rehabilitation.

Moreover, the study revealed that 42% of participants had been arrested, indicating a cycle of recidivism often fueled by a lack of employment opportunities and insufficient social support. While 42% felt somewhat secure financially, their reliance on inadequate sources of income, such as borrowing (21%) or support from partners (25%), places them in precarious situations.

To effectively combat these issues, a comprehensive strategy is essential. This should include enhancing family support systems, providing accessible educational and career opportunities, and developing programs that specifically address substance abuse and its consequences. Policymakers, social services, and community organizations must collaborate to create a holistic approach that considers the multi-faceted nature of these challenges.

By prioritizing the well-being of female prisoners and addressing the socio-economic factors that contribute to their criminal behavior, we can work towards breaking the cycle of recidivism and fostering a safer, more supportive environment for all women. Ultimately, improving the lives of these individuals is not only crucial for their future but also for the stability and security of society as a whole.

**Recommendations**

1. Strengthening family support systems is vital for addressing the root causes of criminal behavior among female prisoners. Many participants come from unstable or low-income households, leading to financial strains that contribute to their circumstances. Community-based initiatives that provide financial assistance, counseling, and parenting programs can help families create safer and more supportive environments, ultimately reducing the likelihood of criminal involvement.
2. Improving access to education and vocational training is essential for breaking the cycle of crime and poverty. Many participants reported limited educational backgrounds and job prospects. Establishing free or subsidized educational programs and vocational training specifically tailored to the needs of female

prisoners can empower them with the skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency, thereby reducing recidivism rates.

3. Implementing comprehensive substance abuse treatment programs within correctional facilities is crucial. Given that a significant percentage of participants reported drug use, providing access to counseling, rehabilitation, and ongoing support can address addiction issues and promote recovery. These programs should focus on holistic approaches that consider the socio-economic challenges faced by participants.
4. Advocating for policies that provide economic support and job placement services for female prisoners upon their release is crucial. Programs that facilitate access to stable housing, employment opportunities, and social services can significantly improve their chances of reintegrating successfully into society and reducing recidivism.

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